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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *June* the 13th, 1754.

Diruit, ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis. HOR.

AT this ſeaſon of the year, when every man is raiſing his ſhare of duſt on the public roads, in order to feaſt his lungs with freſh air, and his eyes with novelty, I am led to conſider a modern character, ſcarce ever touched upon before, and which hitherto has obtained no other name from the public than the general one of an IMPROVER.

IN former times, when the garden was made for fruit, the water for fiſh, and the park for veniſon, the ſervants preſided in their ſeveral departments, and the lord of the manor and his gueſts had nothing to do but to ſit down and cram themſelves with the products of each. But ſince the genius of TASTE has thought fit

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to make this iſland his principal reſidence, and has taught us to enjoy the gifts of nature in a leſs ſenſual manner, the maſter of the place thinks it incumbent on him to change the old ſyſtem, to take all under his own care, and to ſee that every thing be of his own doing. ALTERATION therefore muſt of neceſſity be the firſt great principle of an IMPROVER. When he ſhews you a plantation, it is conſtantly prefaced with "Here ſtood a "wall." If he directs your eye over an extent of lawn, "There, ſays he, we were crouded up with trees." The lake, you are told, was the ſpot where ſtood the old ſtables or the kitchen-garden; and the mount was formerly a horſe-pond. When you have heard this, you are next of all to know how every thing is to be ALTERED STILL FARTHER: for as the IMPROVER himſelf never enjoys the preſent ſtate of things, he labours to diſturb the ſatisfaction you expreſs, by telling you that on the mount is to be a building; that the water is to be altered in ſhape, ſize and level, and muſt have a caſcade and a bridge; that the largeſt trees in the plantation muſt be cut down to give air and ſunſhine to ſhrubs and flowers—In ſhort, the deſcription of what IS TO BE, continues through the whole evening of your arrival; and when he has talked you to ſleep, and it is evident that you can hear no longer, he compaſſionately diſmiſſes you to reſt, knowing that late hours are incompatible with his deſigns upon you in the morning. Innocent of theſe deſigns, you enjoy the quiet of your chamber, comforting yourſelf that you muſt have ſeen and heard all, and that *the bitterneſs of* IMPROVEMENT *is over*. Or if you are ſuſpicious of any remaining fatigue, and are therefore prepared with the proper remonſtrances and evaſions,

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they will avail you nothing againſt an old practiſed IMPROVER: for the inſtant you have breakfaſted, he propoſes your taking a turn or two in the bowling-green for a little freſh air; to which you readily aſſent; and without imagining there can be any occaſion for ſtepping out of your ſlippers, you advance with him to the end of the green, where a door in a ſunk fence unexpectedly opens to the park. And here, as he aſſures you *the graſs is ſhort*, you are led through all the pleaſures of unconnected variety, with this recommendation, that it is but a little way from the Palladian portico to the Gothic tower; from the Lapland to the Chineſe houſe; or from the temple of Venus to the hermitage. By this time you are inſenſibly enticed to a great diſtance from the houſe; when on a ſudden he ſhews you over the park wall a number of labourers mending the highway; and, *ſince you are got ſo far*, wiſhes you to go a little farther, that he may take this opportunity to give a few neceſſary inſtructions, and that the road may be mended with the advantage of your opinion and concurrence. In vain do you pull out your watch; in vain remonſtrate to him how late it is, or how rude it will be to make the ladies wait dinner: in vain do you try to move him by ſtroaking your chin, and ſhewing him a moſt perſuaſive length of beard, or implore his compaſſion on your Morocco ſlippers, pleading that if you had expected ſo long a walk, you would have put on your ſtrong ſhoes—— He knows that if you had apprehended a walk of half the diſtance, he never could have moved you from your eaſy chair; and being thoroughly ſenſible that it will not be in his power to get you ſo far again, is reſolved to make his advantage of the preſent opportunity; ſo leads you to every ditch that is emptying, or brick-kiln

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that is reeking for him; to his barn that is to be turned into a church, or to his farm that is to be made a ruin for the ſake of his proſpect; till at length he brings you ſo late home, that you are obliged to ſit down undreſſed to a ſpoilt dinner with a family out of humour.

I REMEMBER the good time, when the price of a haunch of veniſon with a country friend was only half an hour's walk upon a hot terraſs; a deſcent to the two ſquare fiſh-ponds, overgrown with frog-ſpawn; a peep into the hog-ſtye, or a viſit to the pidgeon-houſe. How reaſonable was this, when compared with the attention now expected from you to the number of temples, pagoda's, pyramids, grotto's, bridges, hermitages, caves, towers, hot-houſes, &c. &c. for which the day is too ſhort, and which brings you to your meal fatigued and overcome with heat, denied the uſual refreſhment of clean linen, and robbed of your appetite!

HAVING now ſufficiently warned the VISITOR of what he is to guard againſt, it is but juſt I ſhould give ſome few hints for the ſervice of the IMPROVER, whom I muſt always conſider (a little vanity excepted) as acting upon principles of benevolence, and from a deſire of giving pleaſure. It is this principle that blinds and miſleads his judgment, by ſuggeſting to him that he ſhall find from the VISITOR and others, who come to ſee his works, returns of equal civility and good-humour. But it will be expedient for him to reflect that theſe gentlemen do not always bring with them that deſire to be pleaſed, which, by his own diſpoſition, he is too apt to ſuppoſe, and which one would think ſhould be eſſential to every party of pleaſure: for (excluſive of that natural inclination to cenſure, which ſo generally attends all exerciſe of the judgment) on theſe occaſions,

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every occurrence of the day will probably adminiſter to the ſpleen of the critic. If the weather be too hot, or too cold for him; if it be windy or ſhowery; if he has ſlept ill the night before; if he is hungry or ſick; if he is tired or ſore; if he has loſt a bett upon the road; if he has quarrelled with his friend; if he has been rebuked by his wife; or in ſhort, if any thing has offended him, he is ſure to take his revenge in full, by finding fault with every thing that was deſigned for his entertainment. In this diſpoſition of mind, there is nothing ſafe but the ſhady gravel walk, with the few plain and neceſſary reſting places, which leads to the undiſguiſed farm, or the navigable river. He will be ſure to allow you no poſtulatum. He abſolutely denies the exiſtence of hermits, mandarins, and the whole heathen ſyſtem of divinities. He diſputes the antiquity of your ruin, and the genuineſs of your hermitage: nay, he will deſcend to cavil at the bell with which the hermit is ſuppoſed to ring himſelf to prayers. He is ſo cruel as to controvert your ſuppoſition that the new-made water is a river, though he knows it muſt have coſt you an immenſe ſum, and that it covers the richeſt meadow-ground you are maſter of. He leads the company to every ſunk fence which you chuſe ſhould be unobſerved. If he ſuſpects a building to be new-fronted, he finds out a private way to the decayed ſide of it; happy if he can diſcover it to have been a ſtable or a pig-ſtye. His report of your place, after he has left it, is exactly of a piece with his behaviour, while there. He either deſcribes it as a bog that will not bear a horſe, or as a ſand that cannot produce a blade of graſs. If he finds in reality neither bog nor barren ſand, his wiſhes ſupply his belief, and he labours to perſuade himſelf and others that one of theſe defects is the characteriſtic of your ſoil, but that you hate to be told of it, and always deny it.

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